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ACTION EA-12
INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAF-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 JUSE-00 /059 W
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY BAF DATE 2/12/80

R 220819Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8361
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, KS, US
SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF PAK TONG SON CASE
REF: SEOUL 10747

SUMMARY: DECEMBER 22 PRESS WAS DOMINATED BY STORIES RELATED TO NATIONAL EXPORT DAY AND ARTICLES ON PAK CASE AND NINTH AMBASSADOR-FONMIN TALKS RECEIVED ONLY MODERATE PLAY. GOSSIP COLUMNS CARRIED MOFA AMERICAN BUREAU DIRECTOR'S CAUTIONING REMARKS, AND MOST PAPERS CARRIED EXCERPTS OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR STORY THAT PAK WOULD TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE. END SUMMARY.

1. PAPERS GAVE MODERATE FRONT-PAGE PLAY TO NINTH AMBASSADOR-FONMIN TALKS AND PROSPECTIVE AGREEMENT ON PAK CASE. PRESS SPECULATED THAT THERE WOULD BE ONE OR TWO MORE AMBASSADOR-FONMIN MEETINS AND THAT THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE ANNOUNCED NO LATER THAN THE BEGINNING OF NEXT WEEK. PAPERS REPORTED THAT THE ISSUE OF DETERMINING PAK'S INTENTIONS TOWARDS COMING TO THE US HAD BEEN SETTLED BY A LETTER PAK SENT TO AMBASSADOR SNEIDER, AND THAT PAK'S MEETING WITH DOJ OFFICIALS IN AMEMBASSY WOULD BE CONCERNED ONLY WITH

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"IRONING OUT LEGAL PROCEDURES". ON THE ISSUE OF PAK'S RETURN TO KOREA, MORNING PAPERS SAID THAT THE FINAL AGREEMENT WOULD REFLECT POSITIONS OF BOTH SIDES. AFTERNOON CHUNGANG ILBO SUGGESTED THAT THE PROBLEM WOULD BE RESOLVED BY PAK WRITING A LETTER TO AMBASSADOR SNEIDER EXPRESSING "HIS DESIRE TO RETURN TO KOREA BY ALL MEANS". OTHER AFTERNOON PAPERS SUGGESTED THAT ROK WAS STILL AWAITING US REPLY ON "ONE QUESTION". TONGA ILBO REPORTED THAT IT HAD BEEN LEARNED THAT A POLYGRAPH WOULD BE USED WHEN PAK IS INTERROGATED IN SEOUL.

2. KYONGHYANG SHINMUN AND CHUNGANG ILBO GOSSIP COLUMNS QUOTED PAK SANG YANG, MOFA BUREAU OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR, AS SAYING THAT NEGOTIATIONS WERE NOT "SMOOTH SAILING" AND TELLING REPORTERS THAT NO ONE AT MOFA HAD SAID THAT AGREEMENT WOULD DEFINITELY BE REACHED THIS WEEK. BUREAU DIRECTOR WAS FURTHER QUOTED THAT "NEWSPAPERS REPORT THINGS TOO FAST, SO WE MUST MOVE VERY CAUTIOUSLY".

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3. PAPERS CITED CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR STORY THAT PAK WILL TESTIFY BEFORE US CONGRESS AND THAT HOUSE ETHICS COMMITTEE INVESTIGATORS HAVE MADE A LIST OF 25-30 PRESENT AND FORMER CONGRESSMEN WHO WERE SUBSTANTIALLY INVOLVED IN LOBBYING CASE. ARTICLES SAID THAT PAK WOULD TESTIFY BEFORE ETHICS COMMITTEE IN LATE JANUARY OR EARLY FEBRUARY AND THAT PAK MIGHT ALSO TESTIFY BEFORE THE SENATE. ARTICLES NOTED THAT PAK'S LAWYER HAS PROMISED TO COOPERATE WITH US CONGRESS AND THAT PAK WAS LIKELY TO TESTIFY AT A CLOSED SESSION.
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